

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T AMMAN 2350

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY FROM PICKERING
DEPT PASS DOD AND DEPUSCINCEUR-HANDLE
AS SPEACT EXCLUSIVE.

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: MASS PFOR JO US SA UR

SUBJECT: JORDAN AIR DEFENSE

REF STATE 103212

1. ON MY INSTRUCTION, DATT TALKED WITH CINC JAF
BEN BIN SHAKER ABOUT THE ADDITIONAL PAYMENTS
WHICH MIGHT COME DUE FOR JORDA IN CONNECTION WITH
THE PROLONGATION OF THE HOLD ON THE CONTRACTS. WHAT
FOLLOWS IS HIS WRITTEN REPORT ON THE CONVERSATION
2. DATT CALLED ON CINC THIS AM TO CONVEY CONDITION
OF I HAWK EXTENSION WHICH WOULD REQUIRE AN ADDITIONAL
CHARGE OF UP TO DOLS 1.4 MILLION. CINC DID NOT
HESITATE IN HIS RESPONSE THA THE DAT TO DAY EXTENSION
WAS A USG INITIATIVE WHICH JORDAN NEVER REQUESTED.
THEREFORE IN LIGHT OF THE 29 APRIL LETTER FROM PRINCE
FAHD AFFIRMING SAUDI DECISION TO HOLD TO DOLS 300
MILLIN OFFER FOR AIR DEFENSE FROM WESTERN SOURCES IT
WAS POINTLESS FOR JORDAN TO COMMIT ITESELF TO AN
ADDITIONAL DOLS 1.4 MILLION. HE CONFIRMED HIS
DECISION WITH PM AND REQUESTED IT BE RELAYED
THROUGH OFFICIAL CHANNELS.

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3. CINC WAS IN A SOMBER MOOD AND FATALISTIC ABOUT JORDANS DECISION TO GO TO SOVIETS. AFTER LONG INVOLVED DISCUSSION DURING WHICH DATT PROBED FOR SOME SOFTENING IN THIS POSITION, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT CINC IS DECIDEDLY IN FAVOR OF GOING SOVIET, WITH LONG TERM FINANCING POSSIBLY BACKED BY A NEW THIRD PARTY (IMPLIED LIBYA) HE FEELS THAT USG AND SAUDI ARABIA HAVE FORCED JORDN INTO THIS POSITION. THE USG ESSENTIALLY FOR TWO REASONS: THE TORTURED CONGRESSIONAL DEBATES IN US WHICH MADE THE 14 BATTERY DEFENSE SACROSANCT AND THE USGS MEAGER MILITARY SUPPORT FOR JORDAN COMPARED TO BILLIONS OF DOLLARS AND RAPID DELIVERIES TO ISRAEL--THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT BECAUSE IT APPEARS DETERMINED TO KEEP JORDN AT A BARE EXISTENCE LEVEL COMPARED TO THEIR UNLIMITED WEALTH. HE FEELS THAT EVEN IF IT MEANS A LOSS OF FURTHER GRANTS FROM BOTH STATES THAT JORDAN CAN FIND OTHER BACKERS AND CAN HANDLE THE ARRANGEMENT WITH THE SOVIETS. HE APPEARS UNSHAKEABLE IN THIS POSITION AND DATT DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THERE WILL BE ANY COUNTER ARGUMENTS FROM CINC TO HIS MAJESTY REGARDING JORDANS DECISION TO GO SAM 6 IF I HAWK DEAL COLLAPSES.

4. FOLLOWING THE ABOVE DISCUSSION THE ADDITIONAL FUNDS QUESTION WAS RAISED WITH ME BY PRIME MINISTER I TOLD HIM THAT I DID NOT FEEL I COULD HAVE RAISED THAT KID OF A DETAIL WITH THE KING AND THAT FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO SEE PM WAS THIS MORNING. HE SAID THAT JORDAN HAD NO FUNDS TO PAY FOR THAT KIND OF CHARGE AND THAT JORDAN INDEED DID NOT ASK FOR EXTENSION OF THE CONTRACT THROUGH APRIL OR FOR THE ORIGINAL CONTRACT WHICH NECESSITATED JORDAN PAYING A DOLS 12 MILLION FIGURE. AGAINST THAT BACKDROP THIS CHARGE WAS AN INSIGNIFICANT COST AND BESIDES AFTER LETTER FROM FAHD HE THOUGHT THERE WAS NO LIFE LEFT IN THE DEAL AND EXTENSION WOULD BE FOR A FEW DAYS ONLY. JORDAN WILL NOT BE ABLE TO EXTEND BEYOND THE 10TH OF MAY IN ANY EVENT. AFTER THE FAHD LETTER THE US KNOWS JORDAN CANNOT NOW PAY ANY ADDITIONAL CHARGES AND IT WILL HAVE TO DECIDE WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE CONTRACT

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EXTENSION IN LIGHT OF JORDANS PRESENT PREDICAMENT.

5. COMMENT: I HOPE THAT WHATEVER SMALL CHANGE IS DEVELOPED BY EXTENSION FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS CAN BE HANDLED ONE WAY OR ANOTHER POSSIBLY AS PART OF THE DOLS 12 MILLION PLUS WHICH WE HAVE ALREADY TOLD JORDANIANS THEY OWE US FOR CONTRACT EXTENSION COSTS HOWEVER I CANNOT JUDGE FROM HERE THE NEED FOR THIS

KING OF COMMITMENT FROM JORDAN. IF EXTENSION CANNOT
BE GRANTED I FEAR THAT WE WILL ASSUME A LARGE SHARE
OF THE BURDEN FOR MAKING THE DEAL UNWORKABLE. THIS
WILL HAVE TO BE BALANCED OFF AGAINST THE ACTUAL MONEY
COSTS FOR A FURTHER DEALY.

6. ADDITION COMMENT: JORDANIANS MIGHT BE
THINKING AS BIN SHAKER SUGGEST OF GETTING LIBYANS
TO HELP PAY THE SOVIETS FOR THEIR AIR DEFENSE. ON THE
OTHER HAND WE ASSUME SOVIETS MIGHT BE INTERESTED
ENOUGH TO EXTEND LONG TERM CREDIT TO THEMSELVES.
PICKERING

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